1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the other is the *tamtoom* of bastardy. It is possible to diagnose bastardy goitres because these will ache in the presence of corpses or in the houses where bastards have been born.

There are six reputed bastards in Lingthem, but only two of these were born from unmarried mothers, and for only one of them, the old mother of Pargeut, did the father perform *thip-song*. The first Dorjé Lapoon is said to be the son of a travelling Sikkimese; he was born during his father's prolonged absence. Lumba *chith-embu* is believed to be the bastard of a lama of Talung on the ground that they look exactly like one another, and Dunbi, for the same reason, is said to be the son of his father's 'younger brother'. In the face of strong physical resemblance with a possible father, it is generally believed that this man, rather than the husband, was the begettor. Nahyeun is generally believed to be Dunbi's bastard; he was born of an unmarried girl when his father was already married. Little Seryop Katoo who was born when his mother's husband was twelve has already been mentioned; his begettor is said to be Jiroong's elder brother. In her time Kurma's mother bore two bastards, one before her marriage, and one when she was a widow. There are cases in which a man believes himself to be the father of another man's child; but these suspicions are always kept very quiet.

The production of a bastard is no draw-back on the girl's subsequent marriage; on the contrary, the fact that she has shown herself fertile makes her if anything more desirable. The Lepchas have a great and justifiable fear of sterility; they do not on the other hand manifest or express any fear of impotence, and no aphrodisiacs are employed. One or two extremely peculiar and incongruous ones are known of, for they are hawked about in Gangtok and other towns where there is a ready market for them among the Hindus, and, somewhat less, among the Nepali. For the Lepchas these are extremely funny; they cannot conceive of the loss of potency, any more than the loss of appetite, except through illness or old age.

There is an altogether surprising amount of sterility among the Lepcha women of Zongu.[16] Of the fifty-six married women over twenty, eighteen were completely sterile and one had only produced a still-born daughter. Of these seven had reached or passed the menopause without producing any children; four are between

[16] For the complete fertility tables of the women of Lingthem, and also for complete life tables see Appendix I, a.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

789 rain-control worked, and cited numerous examples from their past experience to prove it.

This is the only instance of powers which the Lepchas themselves deem supernatural being used in ordinary life. The tradition of sorcery has already been referred to; its use is so rare that it plays no part in the life of most people. There is a tradition of love magic in which the hairs of the two people meant to love one another are plaited and concentrated upon. Although they know the ritual, lamas themselves say that nobody living has performed it. It is said that Mun are requested to do this by one spouse if the other is unfriendly or by parents if their child and his or her spouse disagree: I never heard of an actual instance of this and it would seem as though it were only a tradition.

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

the ceremonial objects and women usually have a good wash at least once a month; grown men on the other hand wash exceedingly seldom. But even though they are so dirty they are in comparison with the Tibetans relatively clean; it is true that they have a much more clement climate and an abundance of water, so that there is no external reason for their being as dirty as they are.

vii

The chief attention that a full-grown Lepcha pays to his person is the care of his hair. Until about puberty children of both sexes have their hair cut short, and lamas always have their heads shaved or close-cropped; but the hair of a woman or layman must never be cut after *asék*. Indeed were a woman after betrothal to cut her hair it would be *nam-toak* and would produce the death of a member of her family. Men wear their hair in a single long plait hanging down their back, often with a thread ending in a tassel braided into it; women nearly always have their hair in two plaits, taken from either side of the nape of the neck; sometimes these two plaits are bound separately round the head; others wear them with the two ends joined together with a piece of braid. Men nearly always have longer hair than women; many men had plaits reaching down to the waist; the women's hair rarely fell below their shoulders. Men with long pigtails often twist them round their heads when working, as the swinging queue gets in the way. In the presence of a superior men and women always let their hair hang down as a mark of respect; and the first act of a nun on coming to worship at the monastery is to remove her head-cloth and let her hair fall on her shoulders.

Once a week if possible the hair is unplaited, if necessary deloused, washed, oiled, and then replaited. With the exception of a spouse and the parent-in-law of the opposite sex anybody may perform this service for anybody else; even adult brothers and sisters may dress each other's hair. Hair-dressing is considered an impersonal and unintimate act; at feasts and large gatherings there is often a long line of people seated with each arranging the hair of the person in front of him.

Long and lustrous hair is one of the points of beauty for members of both sexes; other points which are considered desirable are a straight nose, a flat face, a fair rosy complexion, a round head and a straight body without prominent curves. Big eyes, small eyes,

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 826 pop-eyes or folded eyelids are ugly; so are dimples, too big or too small a mouth, a protuberant bottom or big breasts. Particularly disliked is too big a head or a 'curved face', that is a face which in silhouette does not fall into one plane. White and even teeth and a pleasant smile are also desirable. Men and women are considered equal in beauty but a woman is considered to be at her most beautiful at the age of twelve, a man at the age of twenty. It is considered that on the whole a beautiful man will marry a beautiful woman and an ugly man an ugly woman, but this does not happen invariably; and the ugliness of a person is not considered to be a valid reason for refusing a marriage. A woman's beauty is considered to be somewhat spoilt by childbearing.

826 The differences in beauty of children are remarked but little importance is paid to childish beauty as it is considered essentially impermanent. A girl with a big head and eyes and body and feet is considered somewhat man-like and it is thought that she will work slowly in everything. A man with small features and particularly long eyelashes is considered to look like a woman; such a person will be a swift runner and a clever climber of trees and rocks, able to go where others cannot. Apart from these qualities the idea of temperament is not linked at all with physical appearance.

Freckles are considered disfiguring; they are the *tamtoom* of children who are not orphans eating bamboo shoots when the rice is ripe. 'Just as children have parents above them so rice has bamboo above it; consequently children who have no parents are not affected by this.' Black marks on the skin are caused by young people eating pig's stomach. There is no remedy for either of these disfigurements. On the whole beauty is not of much positive emotional importance; it is only when people are markedly unbeautiful that they are liable to be shunned. Beauty adds to the desirability of strangers as sexual partners; I do not think it is remarked at all in people with whom one is familiar. At the big monastery feasts I often asked people whom they considered to be the best-looking person present; when they did not produce an obscene joke as an answer they would usually refuse to pronounce judgement unless there was a stranger present, in which case the stranger was nearly always chosen. Good-quality and clean clothes and jewels add to the self-confidence of the wearer and to a certain extent enhance the wearer's beauty; but clothes and jewels could 832 never be a substitute for beauty. Nobody would think of borrowing 426 other people's clothes or jewels in order to appear finer and richer

1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

than they really are; they would be frightened of spoiling or losing them, though girls might try on the clothes and jewels of a friend for a moment just to see how they look. The only occasion on which clothes are borrowed is in the case of emergencies, for example if a person gets very wet far from his own home. Sometimes, it is said, a girl will dress up in men's clothes as a joke, but it would be considered rather shameful for a grown man to dress up as a woman, though young boys occasionally do so in play. One or two lamas told me that men were essentially superior to women, but I never heard similar opinions from a layman. Various details suggest that there is a sentiment of sex-rivalry; but it only seems to be openly formulated through contact with Nepali or Tibetans. In specifically Lepcha contexts this rivalry is unformulated and unstressed.

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viii

The ideal life of a Lepcha could be schematically represented by a slightly undulating curve, at first rising steeply, and then gradually flattening out, but still rising somewhat till the very end, when there is a tendency to drop again. The first years of life are a period of relative obscurity; a young child consumes more than he gives, and is therefore a weight on his parents and the community. Children are not on the whole harshly treated, but once they have achieved physical independence very little attention is paid to them. Grown-ups do not talk to or play with children; except when they are by themselves children are in the background to do simple chores and to be taught to equip themselves for adult life; they are a responsibility, not companions. There are no organised games for children, and no instruments which are intended to be children's toys; nor for that matter are there any games for adults. A few Lepchas know of the Nepali game of 'Cows and Tigers' (an elaborate form of the game of which the European 'Fox and Geese' is another representative) but they do not play it and do not understand why other people should do so.

855 524

After about the age of ten a boy takes an increasing share in the productive work of the community and, as he grows up, is co-opted more and more into the communal life. There is no abrupt transition for the male between childhood and manhood; a youth takes on additional responsibility and work, and mingles more in the pastimes and discussions of his elders, according to his ability and private inclinations. Sexual experiment and adventure, marriage

88 882

1:Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

The Lepchas have not elaborated seduction in any way, and the verbal intricacies which are employed on formal occasions are not used for it. In most cases the man usually asks the girl in so many words if he may sleep with her; if she refuses at first there may be a little pleading and persuasion; but, except when they are very young, girls do not appear usually to refuse. Courtship barely exists among the Lepchas and no preliminary stimulations in the way of kisses or embraces are employed, though a man may fondle a woman's breasts immediately before copulation; fondling of the breasts in public is considered slightly shameless but rather funny; it is the equivalent to a direct invitation. Sexual desire is not believed to need any provocation; nakedness is not considered in any way exciting or stimulating; one or two men said they were excited at the sight of a woman's naked thighs; but for the majority immediate anticipation is the only stimulant. Neither sex indulges in any obvious exhibitionism when sober (men, especially older men, sometimes uncover their genitals when drunk) nor in any special coquetry. 832

There is no overt jealousy on the part of fathers or brothers towards the lovers of their sisters or daughters; and it is considered that men have no call to interfere in the sexual life of their female blood-relations unless an unmarried girl produces a bastard. Fathers will generally warn their daughters to be circumspect on this account when they think they have reached an age when this becomes possible; but it was agreed that unless a girl were pregnant a father would have no justification in being angry with her or the man if he discovered his daughter with a lover. 835

Except in the case of recent adultery sexual success is not made a secret of and a successful lover will almost certainly inform his friends. Adultery which is past and finished and pre-nuptial copulation with married people is a subject for open jest and teasing. One day Chudo explained in great detail how and when he had slept with Mrs. Jiroong when they were both unmarried, in the presence of Mrs. Jiroong and a number of other Lepchas. She showed her resentment by throwing a bunch of leaves at him, but forgot even to appear embarrassed. 831

The casual encounter in the field or forest has a somewhat more romantic aura; but it is considered altogether preferable that love-making should take place indoors because of the greater time it allows the pair. In their youth and young manhood (the period Lepchas call *fleng*) Lepcha men would appear to be remarkably 833

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

two, but, so his son says, spends most of his nights with the senior.

Mrs. Chötembu number one, like her mother, is a Mun, but is mainly in request as a singer of songs, of which she has an immense repertoire. I once came across the family working in the fields and asked her to give us a tune. I think she misunderstood my meaning; for it was only when I told her that I was really a *Ge-lug-pa*, or celibate monk, that she finally left me alone: but it took some months to convince her. I should add, however, that her advances were always made in public and caused much amusement to the rest of the family.

* * * * *

Datoop is the elder son of the senior Dorje Lopön. Until relieved by Lumbar he acted as Chötembu for over three years, and is now awaiting advancement to the rank of Umzet. As a boy he spent some years in Gangtok, where he was trained as a carpenter, at which trade he is still employed. He superintends most local building, and with the assistance of the *Hlaribu*, or artist, made most of the woodwork in the Lingtem monastery. He was married at nineteen to a girl seven years his junior, but the pair did not live together until after his return from Gangtok, some five years later. He becomes almost heated when discussing his father's affairs, but thinks it unlikely that he will marry again, since "he is now too old for that sort of thing." He says he would rather live in some place like Gangtok, "where there are people to see and gossip to hear; bazaars to walk in and all sorts of things to buy; but what can one do? Town life is easy, since one does not work in the fields: but without work in the fields money is not forthcoming, so it is better to stay at home." Datoop thinks it good to die rich, since then one's children can do the death ceremony in a proper manner. It would be nice to live to eighty, as up to that age most men can still work in the fields: but to live on till a hundred is definitely staying too long. One does not want to be a burden to others.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

754 trouble others, although of course he knows how to do it. The second Dorje Lopön, however, has often sent them; and by this means has actually caused the death of two people. On the first occasion he was still a pupil when a man came to his master and begged him to use his power to kill a certain person. The teacher thought it a good opportunity to see how his pupil progressed; he told him to have a shot at it, and see what happened. He did so; and in due course the man died. On the second occasion the Dorje Lopön had his knife stolen during some ceremony at the Monastery. He was very angry, but did not know who was the culprit. However, he sent a Mung to kill him; and when a man died shortly afterwards it was naturally believed that he was the thief.

Tafoor has himself learnt how to kill people; but "The State," so he says, "no longer permits the sending of devils for the purpose of causing people's death!" At the present time, in addition to himself, the two Dorje Lopöns are the only people in Lingtem who have the necessary skill. It is said that the first is still willing to exercise his powers on the quiet; but the second Dorje Lopön no longer does this
782 sort of thing: he went on a pilgrimage to Nepal some years ago and took an oath never in future to do it.

832 When a Lama is practising love magic on his own behalf
793 it is only necessary for him to take a rosary in his hand and concentrate on the girl whose love he covets, as a result of which she will be unable to resist his advances. Should his power of concentration, however, be insufficient to produce the desired result, he has only to take a small stone or a lump of dirt, spit upon it and throw it at the girl. This is never known to fail.

When acting on behalf of others the Lama must be given a small piece of hair of each of the man and woman concerned. He twines these two pieces together and then concentrates on the couple, the hair being thrown away later without ceremony. This service costs one rupee; but a friendly Lama will often do it for nothing.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

[793] Tafoor does not himself stoop to the practice of love magic,
756 and I gather that it is considered beneath the dignity of any
932 Lama of position. It is much more commonly done by a Mun; and in this case the procedure is slightly different. A small portion of the hair of both the parties is again necessary. The Mun twists the pieces together, puts them into a clean plate in front of him, and concentrates and chants throughout one whole night. This is known as *Nangyong Hyok*. It is possible to have the ceremony done in order to seduce some other person's wife or husband, but is generally only resorted to when an already married couple do not get on well together. It is not unknown for parents to have the ceremony done on behalf of children when they marry; and especially is this the case in a *mariage de convenance*. Should a mistake be made, and the wrong hair given, nothing can be done to prevent or nullify the effect: the two people concerned will be bound to fall in love. I have often wondered what would happen should the hair of two men be mixed.

171 Love magic does not appear to be commonly practised in Tibet, for none of the books on Lamaism makes any mention of it. It is, however, very popular with most Hindus, particularly Brahmans, who are frequently in the habit of taking wives young enough to be their daughters. It is popular in all parts of Nepal, where Brahman influence is strong, and has, I imagine, been incorporated into Sikkim Lamaism through contact with the people of that country.

751 Amulets are called *Sung-Bo* or *Ka-Wo*, and are of many
777 different kinds. Some of these are Tibetan, others come from Nepal or Bhutan, but all are in common use by Lepchas.

Tse-Sung are amulets for prolonging life and warding off the dangers which threaten it, while *Rim-Sung* are worn only in times of epidemics. *Kunthup-Sung* are used to ward off all sorts of general evil. *Za-Sung* is a charm for epilepsy and is worn only by those who are afflicted by this disease, in order to prevent its attacks. *Sipaha* is an amulet worn by those

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

224 which is filled with pointed stakes. A bear-hunter must [834] refrain from all sexual intercourse for three months from the day the trap is placed in position, otherwise any bears caught in the pit would escape; but apart from this there is no correlation between hunting and sex, such as is common in many parts of the world. In this particular case the con- [832] nection may possibly be due to the fact that bears' gall- [757] bladders are believed to have some aphrodisiac quality; but they are also said to be useful in curing pains at childbirth, [844] and, mixed with hot water, as an antidote for malaria. They are also much used for curing the peculiar itching of the feet, which is said to be due to walking over excreta in the fields [435] during hot weather. They can be sold in Gangtok for about five rupees each. The flesh, however, is eaten and considered to be rather a delicacy; but for some reason or other most "civilised" people consider it to be unfit for human consumption. I do not know why, for the bear is an exceptionally clean eater and lives mostly on roots and other vegetable matter. I have on occasion tasted the meat myself; it is undoubtedly somewhat full-flavoured and rather tough, and tastes a little like steak that is past its prime; but apart from these minor disadvantages it is perfectly palatable, and no more offensive than beef or pork.

773 One day a man was wandering on the hillsides when he saw what he took to be the dead body of a bear. It was in reality a god; but the actual spirit had for the moment left the bear's body and was standing at a little distance looking on. The man cut up the carcass and ate a portion, when the god itself appeared. "You have eaten my body," it said; "and in return you must worship and serve me henceforth. From this day, however, I give you permission to eat all kinds of animal flesh, even unto the bodies of snakes." This [184] was how the Salong clan of the Lepcha tribe took to eating snakes; but they gave up the habit several generations ago, and it is said that there are now no snake-eaters in Jongu.

224 Once a man takes to hunting he must continue to make

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

knew that his daughter (now aged twelve) was having 833
relations with a man; but he would not like her to give birth
to a bastard, on account of the possible harm to the crops.
Neither he nor his wife has spoken to her on the subject, nor
is this ever done. Incidentally, it may be noted that the
swelling of a young girl's breasts is not thought to be a sign of [827 881]
puberty, for which there is indeed no special name, but
an indication that she has commenced to have sexual
relations.

Masturbation is not, of course, unknown, but is seldom 839
indulged in by reason of the fact that women are available
from the earliest moment that a boy feels the need of sex.
The general opinion is that it is slightly silly and rather
funny.

The average married Lepcha has sexual relations with his 833
wife at least once every night, but abstinence is thought to
cause no harm, and indeed makes one fat and healthy. It
should be noted, however, that abstinence is interpreted as
meaning having sexual relations only once in every three or
four days. Tafoor now considers himself a very continent
man, but says that when he first married he usually copulated
with his wife seven or eight times every night. In his opinion
men are not much interested in the sexual act after the age of
sixty or sixty-five; but women continue to take pleasure in the
operation up to the time they die. The menopause seems to [886]
be hardly recognised and certainly does not result in any sort
of psychological disturbance such as seems to be common
among European women. It is realised that after a certain
age women cease to conceive, but there is no break in their
sexual activities. It may be that because of this no attempt is
made to restrain the sex life of the young; for since there is no
break in the sex life of the parents the question of jealousy,
once again, does not arise, as I believe it does in our own
civilisation. But this is a matter for the psychologists to
decide.

Contraception is unknown; nor are aphrodisiacs in general 832
use. It is said, however, that the flesh of a bird called *Kan fo*, [842]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

832 which I have been unable to identify, is said to have a somewhat stimulating effect, and chameleon flesh serves the same purpose. These creatures normally live in trees, but are in the habit of drinking out of wells. If a man drinks water into which they have urinated he is liable to suffer from priapism, and a woman may become a nymphomaniac; but if the actual flesh of the animal is eaten this has a much stronger effect. The flesh of the male animal creates desire; that of the female takes it away. Chameleons are not found in Jongu, but Tafoor says he has seen them exposed for sale in Gangtok. He first heard about their use from old people who had been down to the plains and fought in the Bhutan war: they are not much used in Jongu.

834 It is usual for a man to have no sexual intercourse with his wife during the menstrual period; not, however, for reasons of hygiene, but because it is thought that he may become senseless for a week or so. It is said, though, that women [842] become very amorous at this time, as a result of which intercourse indulged in immediately after the cessation of the menses usually results in conception. This idea is also very common among the Nepalese, who, however, unlike the Lepchas, believe that conception cannot take place at any other time.

843 It is not considered that child-bearing has any particular effect upon a woman: it does not age her in any way, nor does it impair her strength or looks. On the other hand it is not thought harmful if a woman never has a child. During the months of pregnancy the father is liable to get a little thin, and both parents may suffer from a state known as *thum doat*, which appears to be a state of loss of appetite. Both these states, however, are merely due to anxiety and not to any supernatural or other influence.

According to Lepcha ideas the first part of the fœtus to be formed is the head: this takes about one month, and is followed by the remaining parts downward, the feet appearing last of all. The baby is thought to be completely formed after five months, when it also acquires a separate soul of its

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

festival in honour of Kinchinjunga, when the Mandal is to be one of the hosts. From the point of view of noise and privacy the two ceremonies were continuous, and there was yet another sleepless night. Most of those who remained behind were completely drunk, the chief occurrence being the stripping of old Dunbyo, who could only just stand, by a bevy of equally tipsy maidens, who chased the old man round and round the monastery in his birthday suit. The lights were put out at about nine o'clock, but I was given to understand that on this occasion the sanctity of the building was not regarded!

Music again commenced at four a.m. and continued throughout the day. Owing to the Mandal being the feast-giver there was a more than usually large attendance; but otherwise the ceremony did not differ from the previous Kinchinjunga festival, which I have already described.

One drunken old woman from Panung, whom I had several times tried unsuccessfully to photograph, was going round lifting her skirts and exposing her person to each of her friends in turn, at the same time simulating the act of copulation: nobody appeared to think there was anything unusual in her conduct. The party ended officially at about seven in the evening; but once again a number of people remained all night in the monastery. This time, however, they were too drunk to make any noise and the night was mercifully quiet. I suppose this is the last of these festivals I shall see.

1st June:

All the camp kit and my surplus baggage has been sent off with the cook to Kalimpong while I, taking only a very light outfit, go up to the Talung Monastery and return thence by the ordinary trade route to Gangtok. It is a relief to have one's belongings reduced again to reasonable proportions. It has not ceased raining for the last three days, and I fear that the Monsoon has already broken. It is really too early in the year to attempt the Talung trip and some of the older

3: Bell G-5 (1904-21) 1928 AJ1 Tibet AJ1
Lepcha AK5

Soon afterwards the house, in which the *chō-ten* was kept, fell down. The *chō-ten* itself was broken, the corpse was uncovered and went tumbling down the hill-side, four hundred feet, rolling over and over. When the people went to look at it, they were astonished to find that not only was the corpse uninjured, except for a cut near one of the ankles, but that the flesh on the body was as fresh as during the lady's lifetime. They found, too, that it was pure flesh, and not built up with clay, as is the regular practice. The body was carried up the hill again and is encased now in a fresh *chō-ten*. All believe this story with the single-minded devotion to their religion that characterizes the Tibetan. They believe also that when the body was placed in the *chō-ten*, the cut would gradually heal up, as the lady was 'like a manifestation of the Buddha'.

The religion of the Lepchas of Sikkim resembles in many ways the pre-Buddhist faith of Tibet, known as *Pŏn*. As to their funeral ceremonies the History of Sikkim says:

'When a person dies and a funeral ceremony has to be performed, it is done thus: They sacrifice a bull or cow, a fowl or pig, and believe that this is the present of the deceased to the spirits of his ancestors. For this purpose they slay a pig, and, having pierced the entire length of its body with a sharpened bamboo stake, the *Pŏn-pŏn* recites some prayers or incantations called *Pŏn* for three days and nights.'

The Lepchas believe that their spirits are taken after death through subterranean passages to the local deities of Kinchinjunga [1]—the highest mountain in Sikkim and the third highest in the world—as well as to those of other mountains. Different sub-tribes among the Lepchas have different subterranean passages.

But Buddhism, after the Tibetan pattern, is firm set in Sikkim. And therefore many Lepchas nowadays resort to Buddhist rites. As in Tibet throughout the centuries,

[1] The pronunciation usual among Europeans. The correct pronunciation is *Kang Chen Dzö Nga*, 'The Five Treasuries of Great Snow'.